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SUBJECT: JANUARY 30 TAO PRESS BRIEFING: CHEN SHUI-BIAN, NEW AIR
CORRIDOR, ELECTIONS, SNOWSTORMS, CHARTER FLIGHTS, GIANT PANDAS,
MORE

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Summary

11. Key points at the January 30, 2008 Taiwan Affairs
Office (TAO) press briefing were:

-- The TAO spokesman gave a lengthy summary of the cross-Strait
situation over the past year, criticizing Chen Shui-bian's "Taiwan
independence activities."

-- The spokesman refused to answer questions regarding the new air
corridor proposed by Beijing.

-- The Mainland will do its utmost to assist any Taiwanese
enterprises damaged by the recent snowstorms in Southern China.

-- "Noninvolvement" in Taiwan's elections is the Mainland's clear
and consistent position.

-- Arrangements have been made for 94 round-trip charter flights
between the Mainland and Taiwan to fly from February 2-6 and from
February 11-15. End summary.

Chen Shui-bian, Current Situation in the Strait

12. At the January 30, 2008 regular Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) press
briefing, TAO spokesman Yang Yi began with a lengthy statement about
Chen Shui-bian and the situation in the Taiwan Strait. Yang stated
that in the past year, Chen Shui-bian has pressed on with his
"Taiwan independence separatist activities." The Chinese Government
has firmly opposed Chen's "so-called constitutional revision" and
his attempts to hold a "referendum on joining the UN" to achieve
Taiwan's "de jure independence." The relations between the two are
at a critical juncture and curbing "Taiwan independence separatist
activities" is a critical task of China and the Taiwan people.
Facing this severe and complicated situation, the Mainland will be
guided by the principle of "peaceful reunification, one country, two
systems." Yang stated that the Mainland would never give up or
compromise in its opposition to Taiwan independence and would seek
the peaceful development of relations. The Mainland will continue
to promote the implementation of cross-Strait exchanges in order to
maintain the momentum and pace of their development, he said.

No Comment on Civil Aviation Corridor

13. Yang did not comment, when asked about Beijing's proposed new
civil aviation corridor near the center line of the Taiwan Strait.

Mainland Will Not Involve Itself in Taiwan Elections

¶4. "Noninvolvement" (bu jieru) in Taiwan's elections is the Mainland's clear and consistent position, stated Yang when asked if the TAO would offer assistance to Taiwan residents on the Mainland who want to return to Taiwan to vote in the March "presidential election." The TAO is aware that many Taiwan businessmen on the Mainland have expressed interest in ensuring the availability of plane tickets, and the Association of Taiwan Investment Enterprises on the Mainland has already contacted relevant airlines regarding this issue.

¶5. Asked about prospects for the Cross-Strait Economic, Trade and Cultural Forum in the wake of the Kuomintang's (KMT) victory in January's Legislative Yuan elections, Yang said that the Mainland will continue to promote whatever is beneficial to the Taiwan compatriots, cross-Strait exchange, the maintenance of peace in the Taiwan Strait and the realization of the peaceful reunification of the Motherland.

Snowstorms

¶6. Yang stated that the TAO is investigating damage suffered by Taiwan-owned enterprises on the Mainland during the recent snowstorms and will report back if there is any news, responding to a reporter's question. Yang also pledged that the Mainland would do its utmost to assist any Taiwan compatriots or Taiwan enterprises affected by the storms.

Charter Flights

¶7. Yang took multiple questions on charter flights over the Spring Festival holiday period, stating that arrangements had been made for 94 round-trip flights to fly from February 2-6 and from February 11-15. Departure cities will include Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Taipei and Kaohsiung.

Delay in Panda Delivery

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¶8. When asked why the giant pandas, Tuantuan and Yuanyuan, promised to Taiwan by the Mainland have still not arrived, Yang responded that Taiwan had refused to accept the gift because of Chen Shui-bian's "political considerations." Yang said that the Mainland is sincere in its desire to give Taiwan the giant pandas and is still prepared to fulfill its promise.

Fruit Delivery for Olympics

¶9. Yang announced that Beijing has arranged to import Taiwanese fruit to fulfill the wishes of the Taiwanese farmers to have their produce sold at the Olympics.

Mainland to Taiwan Railway Planning

¶10. Yang confirmed that in accordance with the "Comprehensive Transportation Network Long-Term Plan" approved by the State Council, the Ministry of Railways has begun planning for a transportation network spanning from Manzhouli in Northern China to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

Exchange in '07, Charter Flights, TAO Personnel, Crime-fighting, Gravel Exports, Agricultural Exchange

¶11. Asked for a summary of cross-Strait exchange and cooperation in 2007, Yang discussed cooperation in the fields of culture, commerce, agriculture, finance, charter flights and the "three links." Yang said the TAO leadership "has not changed," when asked about a possible upcoming personnel turnover. The spokesman also took questions on cross-Strait crime-fighting, Mainland gravel exports to Taiwan and agricultural exchange.

